

Message Text

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INFO OAU COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

UNCLAS STATE 109977

USEEC

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO GENEVA FROM TUNIS APRIL 27:

QUOTE UNCLAS TUNIS 3060

E.O.11652: NA
TAGS: MEETING OF THIRDSSESSION OF AFRICAN LABOR COMMISSION
TUNIS, APRIL 18-22

REF: STATE 100518

1. SUMMARY. SIGNIFICANT RESULTS OF TUNIS MEETING OF
THIRD SESSION OF AFRICAN LABOR COMMISSION WERE DECISION TO
POSTPONE CONSIDERATION OF CREATION OF AFRICAN LABOR
ORGANIZATION FOR ANOTHER YEAR AND EXPRESSION OF BROAD AFRICAN
SUPPORT FOR CHANGES IN ILO STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS. THESE
INCLUDED EXPANSION OF GOVERNING BODY SEATS TO 52 TO BE
DIVIDED ON BASIS OF BETTER GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION AMONG
FOUR EXISTING REGIONAL GROUPS, ELIMINATION OF PERMANENT
SEATS FOR INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES, AND ABOLITION OF VETO.
LIST OF SIX AFRICAN CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNING BODY SEATS
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WAS APPROVED. ILO QUESTION WAS MOST CONTESTED ISSUE ON
AGENDA, WITH ALGERIA LEADING GROUP TAKING HARDER LINE.
FINAL RESOLUTION PASSED ON ILO ISSUE REPRESENTED COMPROMISE BETWEEN
THIS GROUP AND MORE MODERATE AFRICAN STATES (LED BY
LIBERIA) WHO REPORTEDLY OBJECTED TO EXCESSIVELY POLEMIC
TONE IN ALGERIAN DRAFT RESOLUTION. EMBASSY REPORTING ON
MEETING WAS HAMPERED BY LACK OF ACCESS AND UNINFORMATIVE
NATURE OF OFFICIAL SUMMARIES. FOREIGN PRESS COVERAGE ALMOST
NON-EXISTENT. FINAL RESOLUTIONS (ELEVEN) HAVE YET TO BE
MADE PUBLIC. END SUMMARY.

2 THIRD SESSION OF OAU LABOR COMMISSION OPENED IN TUNIS ON APRIL 18 WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF 49 COUNTRIES PRESENT OR STILL EN ROUTE. DIPLOMATIC CORPS WAS INVITED TO HEAR PRIME MINISTER NOUIRA GIVE BRIEF WELCOMING ADDRESS TO WHICH OAU SECRETARY GENERAL, NIKIAM ETEKE M'BOUMOUA REPLIED. BOTH ADDRESSES WERE COURTEOUS AND ELEGANT BUT WITH FEW SPECIFICS. M'BOUMOUA DID NOTE DANGER OF PLOTS AIMED AT WEAKENING AFRICA AND HE CALLED FOR VIGILANCE AGAINST OUTSIDE INTERVENTIONS FROM WHATEVER SOURCE. HE ALSO CALLED FOR SPECIAL SESSION OF ILO TO DISCUSS STRUCTURE OF ORGANIZATION, STRESSING AFRICANS' ATTACHMENT TO DIALOGUE AMONG FREE AND EQUAL PARTNERS.

3. M'BOUMOUA WAS FOLLOWED BY HEAD OF LIBYAN DELEGATION, MINISTER OF LABOR MOHAMED EL-MAHJOB, WHO SPOKE IN HIS CAPACITY OF OUTGOING PRESIDENT OF COMMISSION (ELECTED AT SECOND COMMISSION MEETING IN TRIPOLI 1977). HE OPENED SPEECH BY REPEATING OFFER THAT HEADQUARTERS OF YET TO BE CREATED AFRICAN LABOR ORGANIZATION BE LOCATED IN TRIPOLI. REMAINDER OF RELATIVELY BRIEF REMARKS ADDRESSED MULTIPLE SINS OF COLONIALISM, IMPERIALISM, AND MULTINATIONALS. UNCLASSIFIED

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SEVERAL PARTICIPANTS TOLD US AFTERWARDS THAT THEY THOUGHT EL-MAHJOB'S REMARKS WERE INAPPROPRIATE FOR FORMAL--AND SUPPOSEDLY NON-SUBSTANTIVE--OPENING SESSION IN PRESENCE OF DIPLOMATIC AND PRESS CORPS. REMAINDER OF SESSION, AT WHICH UNAUTHORIZED OBSERVERS INCLUDING EMBASSIES WERE BARRED, SELECTED OFFICERS FOR COMMISSION AND APPROVED AGENDA. TUNISIA WAS GIVEN PRESIDENCY, SOMALIA, GUINEA AND ANGOLA WERE ELECTED TO VICE PRESIDENCIES AND ZAMBIA WAS NAMED RAPPORTEUR. TUNISIAN MINISTER OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, MOHAMED JOMAA, THEN BRIEFLY ADDRESSED COMMISSION IN HIS CAPACITY OF NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT, AFTER AGENDA CONTAINING AFRICAN PARTICIPATION NAM LABOR MINISTERS CONFERENCE; INTRA-AFRICAN COOPERATION ON LABOR, POPULATION, AND RURAL-SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT; AFRO-ARAB COOPERATION; AND VARIOUS ILO MATTERS (INCLUDING NEXT GENEVA ILO CONFERENCE, STRUCTURE OF ILO AND QUESTION OF AFRICAN REPRESENTATION IN ILO GOVERNING BODY).

4. APRIL 19 SESSION OPENED WITH OAU SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT ON ORGANIZATIONS'S ACTIVITIES FALLING WITHIN COMPETENCE OF COMMISSION. THIS INCLUDED RELATIONS BETWEEN COMMISSION AND ILO, MANDATE OF ILO DIRECTOR GENERAL, WORK OF COMMISSION (OTHERWISE UNSPECIFIED) AND RESULT OF AD HOC COMMITTEE CHARGED WITH STUDYING CREATION OF AFRICA LABOR ORGANIZATION. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS, REPORT STRESSED AFRICAN DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE PROGRESS OF

ILO "DESPITE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. FOR POLITICAL REASONS."
SOME DISSATISFACTION WAS REPORTEDLY NOTED OVER "ILO'S
FAILURE TO INFORM AFRICAN STATES REGARDING QUESTION OF
DIRECTOR GENERAL SUCCESSION. AD HOC GROUP RESPONSIBLE FOR
STUDYING CREATION OF AFRICAN LABOR ORGANIZATION REPORTED
ON ITS WORK, AND WAS REQUESTED TO PREPARE FULL REPORT FOR
PRESENTATION IN NEXT COMMISSION MEETING. MENTION WAS
ALSO MADE OF OAU INTENTION TO REACTIVATE ITS OFFICE IN
GENEVA AND TO NAME PERMANENT OAU REPRESENTATIVE TO ILO.
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5. AFTERNOON SESSION HEARD REPORTS FROM VARIOUS GEOGRAPHIC
GROUPS AFTER WHICH QUESTION OF COOPERATION BETWEEN ARAB
AND AFRICAN LABOR COMMISSIONS WAS REVIEWED. CESCUTIONS
WERE INCONCLUSIVE, AND WERE BROUGHT TO CLOSE BECAUSE OF
"ABSENCE OF DOCUMENTS."

6. APRIL 20 MEETING OPENED WITH REPORT OF ILO DIRECTOR
GENERAL FRANCIS BLANCHARD. IN OPENING REMARKS HE NOTED
PROBLEMTLQMUSED BY U.S. WITHDRAWAL IN NOVEMBER AND THAT AS
CONSEQUENCE ORGANIZATION'S EXPENDITURES HAVE BEEN REDUCED BY
21.5 PERCENT DESPITE INCREASED CONTRIBUTIONS OF VARIOUS
COUNTRIES. HE ADDED THAT ILO ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA HAVE BEEN
AND WILL BE MAINTAINED. WORK OF VARIOUS ILO MEETINGS DEALING
WITH AFRICA WAS THEN REVIEWED. CONCERNING AFRICAN
CRITICISM OF ILO STRUCTURE, BLANCHARD EXPLAINED
(ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL SUMMARY) THAT "ALL PRIVILEGES WILL
BE ABOLISHED AND ALL SEATS WILL BE ELECTIVE(ARTICLE 7).
SIMILAR PROGRESS HAS BEEN ACHIEVED CONCERNING AMENDMENT TO
ARTICLE 37 RELATING TO RIGHT TO VETO. UNDERSTANDING HAS ALSO
BEEN REACHED ON QUORUM ISSUE AND WILL BE SUBMITTED WITH OTHER
PROPOSALS FOR APPROVAL BY MEMBER COUNTRIES. THIS WORK HAS
BEEN UNDERTAKEN IN FRAMEWORK OF DEMOCRATIZATION OF ILO."
ACTIVITES OF ILO TURIN TRAINING CENTER WERE REVIEWED AND
APPEAL FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WAS MADE. OAU REPORT ON
TRANSNATIONAL CORPORATIONS WAS READ, AND NEED OF HOST
COUNTRIES TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER THEIR ACTIVITES WAS
STRESSED. FORMATION OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFRICAN WORKING
GROUP TO DRAW UP DOCE OF CONDUCT REGULATING TRANSNATIONALS
WAS URGED.

7. SECRETARY GENERAL DENIS AKUMU THEN GAVE REPORT ON
ACTIVITES OF OATUU, N WHICH HE CITED PROBLEMS OF
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TRANSNATIONALS, AFRICAN WORKERS IN EUROPE, AND ROLE OF
AFRICAN UNIONS IN CONTRIBUTING TO CONTINENT'S DEVELOPMENT,
TOQM HE ALSO CALLED FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF AFRICAN INSTITUTE
FOR WORKER TRAINING, OATUU OBSERVER STATUS IN LOME CONVENTION,
AND EXPANSION OF "CHECK OFF" SYSTEM IN AFRICAN TRADE UNIONS.

8. IN COURSE OF REMARKS AKUMU DEPARTED FROM PREPARED STATEMENT TO MAKE "COUP DE SCENE" AND THIS WAS AGAINST TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT. TO SURPRISE OF MOST PARTICIPANTS, ON BEHALF OF OATUU HE APPEALED TO GOT TO SUSPEND LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AND RELEASE HABIB ACHOUR, EX-SECRETARY GENERAL OF TUNISIAN LABOR CONFEDERATION AND OTHER ARRESTED TRADE UNIONISTS. IT WAS NOT APPROPRIATE, HE SAID, FOR TUNISIA TO HOLD UNDER ARREST SO MANY UNIONISTS AT TIME WHEN TUNISIA HELD COMMISSION PRESIDENCY AND WAS SPOKESMAN FOR AFRICAN GROUPS IN ILO. NO MENTION OF THIS "OATUU STATEMENT AND APPEAL" WAS MADE IN TUNISIAN MEDIA, NOR WAS THERE ANY REFERENCE TO AKUMU'S REMARKS IN OFFICIAL RESUME OF PROCEEDINGS PREPARED BY TUNISIAN CONTROLLED SECRETARIAT. WE UNDERSTAND AKUMU PROTESTED AND INSISTED RECORD BE CORRECTED. RUMOR WAS HEARD THAT GOT PLANNED TO OFFER COUNTER RESOLUTION THAT INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATIONS (OATUU, ICFTU, ILO ETC) SHOULD NOT INTERVENE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS OF MEMBER STATES, BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC REFERENCE TO SUCH RESOLUTION BEING BROUGHT TO VOTE.

9. AFTERNOON SESSION APRIL 20 ALLOWED TIME FOR NUMEROUS STATEMENTS ON VARIED SUBJECTS, INCLUDING SOMALI DRAFT RESOLUTION ON "INTRA-AFRICAN COOPERATION ON EMPLOYMENT SOCIAL/RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED SOCIO-ECONOMIC MATTERS." THIS BROAD PROPOSAL CONCERNED ESTABLISHMENT OF NUMEROUS STUDY AND TRAINING CENTERS THROUGHOUT AFRICA, MANY OF WHICH WERE OPPOSED BY VARIOUS DELEGATIONS AS BEING EITHER PREMATURE, TOO EXPENSIVE, REDUNDANT OR REQUIRING FURTHER STUDY.
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10. ATTENTION THEN TURNED TO DISCUSSIONS OF LIBERIAN REPORT ON AFRICAN PARTICIPATION IN ILO ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL. AMONG SIGNIFICANT RECOMMENDATIONS WERE THOSE THAT COMMISSION SHOULD THOSE MEMBERS WHICH SHOULD REPRESENT AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS OVER COURSE OF NEXT THREE YEARS, AND THAT COMMISSION ESTABLISH COMMITTEE TO STUDY QUESTION OF INCREASING AFRICAN PARTICIPATION IN THAT BODY. APPEAL WAS MADE THAT ILO AFRICAN PROGRAMS NOT BE REDUCED AND THAT AFRICAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO ILO BE INCREASED. REFERRING TO RESULTS OF AFRICAN WORKING GROUP ON ILO STRUCTURE, APPEAL WAS REPEATED FOR ABOLITION OF VETO FOR "SO CALLED IMPORTANT CAPITALIST/ INDUSTRIAL STATES" AND FOR CHANGE IN QUORUM REGULATIONS. NON-ELECTIVE SEATS IN GOVERNING BODY SHOULD BE ABOLISHED, AND NUMBER OF SEATS INCREASED TO 52 TO BE EQUITABLY DISTRIBUTED AMONG EXISTING FOUR REGIONAL GROUPS (NO GROUP WOULD LOSE SEATS AND EACH WOULD RETAIN RIGHT TO NAME REPRESENTATIVES.) A RECOMMENDATION WAS ALSO MADE FOR REGIONAL CONTROL OF ILO ACTIVITIES AND FINANCIAL EXPENDITURE. APARTHEID RECEIVED PASSING SWIPE, AS DID RECENT REELECTION

OF BLANCHARD TO ILO DIRECTOR GENERAL. ABOVE PROPOSALS WERE INCONCLUSIVELY DEBATED AND PASSED TO DRAFTING COMMITTEE FOR RESOLUTION.

11. QUESTION OF PRESIDENCY OF 64TH SESSION OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE WAS THEN DISCUSSED, WITH MEXICO, THE ONLY CANDIDATE WHO RECEIVING FULL SUPPORT.

12. NEXT ITEM OF BUSINESS WAS CHOICE OF SITE FOR 4TH COMMISSION MEETING. AS NO INVITATION HAD BEEN RECEIVED NEXT MEETING MUST TAKE PLACE IN ADDIS ABABA, "ACCORDING TO RULES."

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13. MORNING OF FRIDAY, APRIL 21, WAS DEVOTED TO DRAFTING SESSIONS.

14. FINAL SESSION OPENED FRIDAY EVENING AT 7:15 P.M. AND CONTINUED UNTIL 4:30 A.M. SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 22. ELEVEN RESOLUTIONS WERE PASSED IN COURSE OF MARATHON SESSION. ACCORDING TO SECRETARIAT, RESOLUTIONS HAVE YET TO BE PREPARED OR DISTRIBUTED IN FINAL VERSION BECAUSE OF "OVERWORK" AND NEED TO STAFF NAM LABOR MINISTER CONFERENCE WHICH OPENED APRIL 24. DETAILED INFORMATION IS NOT AVAILABLE, FOLLOWING IS FULLEST INFORMATION WE CAN GIVE ON RESULTS (DRAWN FROM PRESS REPORTS AND OFFICIAL SUMMARY):

- A. RECOMMENDATIONS THAT PAN AFRICAN FAMILY ORGANIZATIONS BE CONSIDERED FOR OAU OBSERVER STATUS.
- B. EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES.
- C. CALL FOR OAU COOPERATION WITH AND SUPPORT OF ILO PROGRAMS IN AFRICA.
- D. RECOMMENDATION FOR INCREASED AFRICAN ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY ASSOCIATION.
- E. APPEAL TO OAU STATES TO AID IN RELIEVING ILO'S FINANCIAL DISTRESS CAUSED BY U.S. WITHDRAWAL.
- F. ILO ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE. THIS WAS MOST COMPLEX ISSUE DEALT WITH, AS BOTH ALGERIA AND LIBERIA SUBMITTED PROPOSALS WHICH REPORTEDLY WERE SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT. EARLY MORNING COMPROMISE COMBINING PORTIONS OF EACH EMPHASIZED AGREEMENT ON ABOLITION OF VETO RIGHTS HELD BY INDUSTRIALIZED STATES AND ON MODIFICATION OF QUORUM REGULATIONS. RESOLUTION ALSO NOTED URGENT NEED TO DEMOCRATIZE ILO IN "CONFORMANCE WITH NEW INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL REALITIES AND PROFOUND ASPIRATIONS OF PEOPLE OF THIRD WORLD FOR CREATION OF A NEW MORE JUST INTERNATIONAL ORDER." SUPPORT WAS GIVEN TO CHANGE IN ILO CONSTITUTION TO PROVIDE THAT ALL SEATS IN GOVERNING BODY SHALL BE DISTRIBUTED IN EQUITABLE BASIS AMONG EXISTING FOUR REGIONAL GROUPS.

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NO GROUP TO LOSE SEATS AND TOTAL NUMBER INCREASED TO 52
IF NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN REGIONAL BALANCE. FOUR
ELECTORAL COLLEGES SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED, WITH EACH REGION
FREE TO RE-ELECT A CERTAIN NUMBER OF MEMBER STATES "TO
INSURE REPRESENTATIVITY" IN GOVERNING BODY. AT END OF
DISCUSSION AFRICAN CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION TO GOVERNING
BODY WERE THEN ANNOUNCED (CAMEROON, ZAMBIA, IVORY COAST,
NIGER, SIERRA LEONE, AND TUNISIA).

G. EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR TURIN TRAINING CENTER.

H. CALL FOR GREATER ARAB-AFRICAN COOPERATION AND APPEAL
FOR INCREASED ARAB FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

I. CALL FOR INCREASED INTRA-AFRICAN COOPERATION AND
EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ON EMPLOYMENT, POPULATION, ETC.
SOMALI PROPOSAL FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF VARIOUS TRAINING
CENTERS IS TO BE STUDIED BY AFRICAN ECONOMIC COMMISSION.

J. CALL FOR INCREASED AFRICAN ACTIVITY IN ILO GOVERNING
BODY IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSAL THAT DAY BE SET ASIDE TO DISCUSS
ELIMINATION OF APARTHEID.

K. APPEAL FOR INCREASED FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OATUU
AND EXPANSION OF SUPPORT FOR OATUU OBSERVER STATUS OF LOME
CONVENTION.

15. ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO OTHER
POST AS APPROPRIATE. MULCAHY UNQUOTE VANCE

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